

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 02187 021741Z

53

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 ACDA-19 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3481

INFO USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 2187

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, NL

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CABINET SPLIT ON DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

1. SUMMARY: CABINET IN REPORTEDLY SPLIT ON DEFENSE WHITE PAPER. DEFMIN AND FONMIN, BACKED BY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC MINISTERS, ARE FIGHTING FOR FIVE YEAR GLOBAL FIGURE EQUIVALENT TO 3.55 PERCENT OF GNP. PM DEN UYL CONTENTS THIS TOO MUCH. DEFMIN VREDELING WAS ASKED TO COME UP WITH ANOTHER PROPOSAL AT LENGTHY CABINET MEETING APRIL 29TH. THIS IS FIRST TIME CABINET HAS BEEN DIVIDED ON MAUOR ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. MFA NATO AFFAIRS DIRECTOR VAN DER VALK TOLD POL COUNS MAY 2 "MOMENT OF TRUTH" HAD COME IN DEFENSE WHITE PAPER EXERCISE. HE SAID DEFMIN VREDELING, BACKED BY FONMIN VAN DER STOEL, WAS DETERMINED THAT DUTCH DEFENSE EFFORT SHOULD NOT FALL BELOW CERTAIN LEVEL AND THAT IF OPPONENTS OF VREDELING'S DEFENSE WHITE PAPER HAD THEIR WAY BOTH VREDELING AND VAN DER STOEL PREPARED TO RESIGN. ACCORDING TO VAN DER VALK, THIS WOULD PRECIPITATE CABINET CRISIS.

3. EMBOFF CHECKED VAN DER VALK STATEMENT WITH PARLIAMENTARY SOURCES AND WAS TOLD IT SUBSTANTIALLY CORRECT. AT APRIL 29TH
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PAGE 02 THE HA 02187 021741Z

CABINET MEETING WHICH RAN UNTIL 4 AM, PM DEN UYL REPORTEDLY TOLD

VREDELING HIS WHITE PAPER FIVE YEAR GLOBAL EXPENSE FIGURE UNACCEPTABLE AND TO GO BACK AND CUT SOME MORE. THIS HAS RESULTED IN POSTPONEMENT OF NATO CONSULTATIONS ON WHITE PAPER. REPORTEDLY VREDELING PROJECTS DEFENSE EFFORT AT APPROXIMATELY 3.55 PERCENT OF GNP OVER FIVE YEAR PLAN. PM THINKS THIS IS TOO HIGH, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW LABOR PARTY ELECTION PLEDGE TO CUT DEFENSE EXPENDITURES BY 1.5 BILLION GUILDERS BY 1976.

4. PARLIAMENTARY SOURCE INDICATED KVP AND ARP LEADERSHIP HAVE MADE CLEAR TO PM THAT MASSIVE DEFENSE CUTS UNACCEPTABLE. BOTH COALITION PARTIES FIND VREDELING WHITE PAPER DRAFT ACCEPTABLE ALTHOUGH THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO COMPROMISE ON SOMEWHAT LOWER PERCENTAGE OF GNP. SOURCE OPINED BOTH VREDELING AND DEN UYL TOUGH NEGOTIATORS BUT FACE SAVING COMPROMISE POSSIBLE. QUESTION IS STILL WHETHER ANYONE BUT LIBERALS WANT NEW ELECTIONS AND TO FIGHT THEM ON ISSUE AS UNPOPULAR AS DEFENSE.

5. ON MAY 2, SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF GENERAL AFFAIRS (RINGNALDA) GAVE CHARGE RUNDOWN OF DEVELOPMENTS IN CABINET ON WHITE PAPER QUESTION. RINGNALDA CONFIRMED CABINET HAD ASKED VREDELING TO GO BACK TO DRAWING BOARD. HE CHARACTERIZED SITUATION AS TOUGH BUT DID NOT SUGGEST IT HAD MAKINGS OF CABINET CRISIS. (SEE SEPTTEL).

6. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST TIME IN ALMOST YEAR LONG HISTORY OF DEN UYL GOVERNMENT THAT CABINET DIVIDED ON FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION. PM MAY BE TAKING INITIAL STRONG LINE TO PLACATE YOUNG LEFT WING OPPOSITION TO CABINET'S NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY (THE HAGUE 2185) AND BE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE. CABINET WILL PROBABLY TAKE UP MATTER AGAIN TOMORROW AT REGULARLY SCHEDULED FRIDAY MEETING.
TANGUY

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